THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. Th Government of Orissa had projected a requirement of Rs.441.05 crores (Rs.406.81 crores for Roads and Rs.34.24 crores for Bridges) for development of existing National Highways during VIIIth Plan (1992-97). The outlay for National Highway for the entire country including Orissa would be known after VIIIth Plan is finalised by the Planning Commission and sectoral allocations are made.

Taxing of Gems and Jewellery of Late Nizam of Hyderabad

2504. SHRI MOHAN SINGH: Will the Ministers of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of items of gems and jewellery declared by the late Nizam of Hyderabad as "heirloom" items to get exemptions under the Wealth Tax Act, 1957 and their total value; and

(b) the number of items of gems and jewellery belonging to the late Nizam of Hyderabad for which his successors have been taxed so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR):(a) and (b). 26 items valued at Rs. 40.05 lakhs were declared as heirloom items by the late Nizam of Hyderabad. In the Assessment year 1957–58, 808 items of the late Nizam (excluding 26 items declared as heirloom) were taxed. Nawab Mir Barkat Ali Khan, the eldest male descendant in the direct male line, succeeded him on 24.2.1967. He received the heirloom jewellery from the trustees of HEH the Nizam's Jewellery Trust on 10.2.1972 after the abolition of the privileges of the ex–Rulers by the Government of India. In the Assessment year 1972-73, he claimed exemption for the heirloom jewellery but offered for tax the other items of jewellery with him. Assessments have been made accordingly thereafter.

Economic Condition of Handloom and Powerloom Weavers

2505. SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the economic condition of the powerloom and handloom weavers in the country is fast-deteriorating;

(b) whether the Government of Orissa has proposed certain measures to help these weaker sections of the society;

(c) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) The recent increase in yarn prices had rendered the handloom and powerloom textiles costlier thereby affecting their marketability leading to temporary under–employment among the weavers. Necessary corrective action has already been taken to the ease the situation and to the bring about stability in yearn prices.

(b) and (c). The State Government of Orissa has informed that there is no specific report on deterioration of economic condition of handloom and powerloom weavers in the State. However, Central Government has formulated and announced a new scheme entitled "Margin Money for Destitute Weavers" for implementation during the current financial year for the benefit of handloom weavers living below the poverty line in all the States of the country. The Government of Orissa is implementing a number of